GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5798
ANSWERED ON:25.04.2001
MEDIA LABORATORY ASIA
UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU

Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to implement a proposal called the `Media Laboratory Asia`;

(b) if so, whether this project will be a joint effort with some foreign universities and institutions;

(c) the details, the cost and the duration of the proposal; and

(d) the benefits likely to be derived therefrom?

Answer

MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN)

(a) and (b): Yes, Sir.

(c): Setting up the Media Laboratory Asia is a joint proposal byMITMedia Lab, USA and Ministry o f Information Technology, Government of India. Established in 1985, the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Media Lab, USAhas been a pioneer in the concept of collaboration between academia and industry, and provides a unique environment to explore basic research and applications without regard to traditional divisions among disciplines. A Media Lab Asia Joint Task Force consisting of MITMedia Lab team and Indian team was set up which has submitted its report in March, 2001. This Joint Task Force report is being examined by the Government.

(d): The Media Lab Asia is proposedto be a network of national as well as overseas people projects and laboratories dedicated to bringing the benefits of the most advanced information technologies to the neediest people. The role of the Media Lab Asia is to facilitate the invention, refinement and deployment of innovations that benefit the masses. The Media LabAsia would b e based around village level field projects supported by research for technology development and partnership. Each project would serve as a focus for technical innovations and serve as research laboratory for sponsoring organization. The objective of the Media Lab Asia is to address the grand challenges of poverty, literacy / education, health, employment, and micro-entrepreneurship through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The activities in the Media Lab Asia projects include a community of researchers working with rural villages and urban slum areas, and helping partner organizations deploy sustainable services such as healthcare, public health monitoring, one-room computer schoolhouses, public and postal services, micro-banking, handicraft trading, informal sector manufacturing, and public entertainment and communications.